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Edwin F. Weigle: Cameraman for the *Chicago Tribune*

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The American press played an important role in the production and exhibition of World War I documentary films. From 1914, a growing number of newspapers closed deals with newsreel companies. Competition among these papers was becoming increasingly intense in this period, and the papers were intent on increasing their circulation and giving a boost to their publicity campaigns. The film companies also welcomed the free publicity generated by the newspapers for these news films.[1]

But many of the photographer-lecturers of the era who achieved prominence by producing these films for the newspapers quickly disappeared from sight after the war. Perhaps the most striking example is Edwin F. Weigle, who suddenly became prominent in 1914 (backed by one of the most powerful newspapers in the world), made films until 1920, and then nearly vanished. It was only when Kevin Brownlow mentioned him, and later when he merited a chapter in Ron van Dopperen's thesis, *De Europese oorlog in beeld*, that he once again became a recognised figure.[2]

Edwin Frederick Weigle was born in Chicago on 13 March 1889.[3] His parents, Adolph H. Weigle and Sophie Weigle, originally from Württemberg, emigrated in 1879; Adolph was naturalized in 1895. Adolph was listed in the 1909 Chicago telephone directory as a painter, but judging from his buying and selling of rental properties, was also a shrewd investor in real estate. Edwin was the product of Chicago high schools, and spoke German. In 1908 he was already listed as a photographer for Hearst's *Examiner*, and went to work as photographer for the *Chicago Tribune* in 1909.[4] His older brother, Arthur Carl Weigle, was listed as an artist, and apparently a good one, but during World War I he worked as an engraver in Chicago. The Weigles first lived at 443 North California Avenue, at the corner of California and Cortez Street, an area into which a number of German-Americans had moved after the Chicago Fire. Later, they bought a property on Kenmore Avenue. In 1914 Edwin was engaged as war correspondent and cinematographer by Joseph Medill Patterson, then co-manager of the *Chicago Tribune*.

Joseph Medill Patterson was the grandson of Joseph Medill, founder of the *Chicago Tribune*, and the brother of the more famous Elinor "Cissy" Patterson. He was also the cousin of Medill and Robert W. "Bertie" McCormick, sons of his aunt Katherine. At this time, before World War I, a complicated arrangement had been worked out in which Patterson and Bertie McCormick shared responsibility for managing the paper. They even took turns at being totally in charge during alternate months, a plan that sounds unworkable but in fact worked out quite well.

Joseph Patterson could be considered an extreme case of what used to be called a trust fund baby. He had been born into a very socially prominent Chicago family, which possessed a fortune from

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Mr. Joseph Medill Patterson, editor of the *Chicago Tribune*, and his cinematograph operator, Mr. Edwin Weigle, taking "movies" at the battle of Waelhem.
Mr. Weigle was one of the few men who succeeded in getting moving pictures of actual fighting.

Fig. 1. Edwin F. Weigle and Joseph Medill Patterson at the battle of Waelheim, photographed by Donald C. Thompson (from *Fighting in Flanders*).

the *Tribune*, although he hated the inherited wealth and social prominence without being able to wean himself from it. Joseph's father, Robert W. Patterson, had been much prized by Joseph Medill as an excellent newspaperman, while his mother Elinor, Joseph Medill's second daughter, was by all reports a social climber. As a youth, Joseph Medill Patterson attended Groton, then went to Yale, where he was a member of the Scroll and Key. He worked sporadically for the *Tribune*, sometimes as a police reporter, and wrote several plays and novels – in some of which he described, as faintly disguised autobiography, the life of a pampered drone. He joined the Socialist Party, but became disillusioned. He was a member of the Illinois state legislature, where he attacked the traction trust, and won. He tried farming, but this caused a rift between him and his first wife, because he wanted to farm seriously and she wanted to make the estate an English deer park. As part of his persona, when he and his cousin Robert took over the *Tribune* as co-editors, he wore old clothes and battered hats, and insisted that his employees call him Joe. His major interests at the paper were the features and the Sunday Magazine section. He turned the weekend paper into a popular magazine with subjects such as sports, fashion, comics and the like. He was extremely interested in the comic pages, which he made the best in any newspaper of the time. And, many years before it became acceptable, let alone fashionable, he liked motion pictures. He wrote a long, affectionate article about nickelodeons that ran in the *Saturday Evening Post* on 23 November 1907. By 1912 he ordered the paper to start reviewing films, naming "Mae Tinee" as the critic.[5] His attained his greatest success in furthering the collaboration of the newspaper with the film industry when he introduced the famous film serial *The Adventures of Kathlyn* with producer William Selig. According to Terry Ramsaye, this serial generated such wide popular attraction that the *Tribune's* circulation grew by 35,000 extra copies. Said Ramsaye: "The *Tribune* wanted to garner circulation from the nickelodeon audiences. It had grown to dignity and glory on appeal to the upper classes, now it was out to take the volume off the bottom where the volume always is."[6]

All of this may make Patterson sound like a lightweight. He was not. Later, after America entered World War I, he resigned his commission in the Illinois National Guard, enlisted in the army as a private, in the Rainbow Division, was in five major battles, was gassed, and left the army as captain. After Patterson's death in 1946, General Douglas MacArthur, his former commanding officer, called Patterson the finest natural soldier that he had ever known.[7] Patterson and the *Tribune* were shrewd enough to see what a draw the "war pictures" could be. And Patterson did not strengthen the comics, pictorial sections, features and women's pages simply because he liked the light side of the news. They sold papers, and at the time the *Tribune* was in the middle of a vicious circulation battle in Chicago with the Hearst papers, a battle that descended to hiring gangsters to keep rival newspapers off the streets.[8] The *Tribune* was determined not to lose this fight, and if films would help, then so be it.

Two other traits about Patterson were to be important to Weigle's film coverage. First, Patterson was already an isolationist in 1914. He denied being pro-German, but the *Tribune* was always ready to publish the German side of a question, and he later admitted that he was not pro-British, which was an understatement.[9] Patterson's stance was typical of the prevailing mood in the Midwest, which was much less pro-Entente than the east coast.[10] In his book *The Notebook of a Neutral* he attacked England's hypocrisy, repeating the arguments of the most sword-rattling German of them all, Friedrich von Bernhardi: war was ennobling, a form of social Darwinism to cull out the weak nations; treaties were indeed mere scraps of paper; and whatever Ger-

many did, including sinking the *Lusitania*, was none of America's business. He went so far as to say that any American who did not put his country's best interests before all other considerations was a traitor.[11]

Second, Patterson craved adventure. All his life he wanted to be a war correspondent. He got William Randolph Hearst to send him to China to cover the Boxer Rebellion when he was still in college – only to arrive in China after the Rebellion was over. So when he met Weigle, an ambitious young man hungry for adventure, Patterson must have felt that he had found a kindred soul. How the two men met is not known. Nevertheless, they became close friends, and Weigle said that Patterson was "later more than a brother to me – a man whose true friendship and excellent companionship I shall never forget".[12]

Mexico was in the throes of a revolution in 1913 and 1914, and was already a hot spot. Weigle had hounded the editors to be allowed to go there as a correspondent, but they did not take him seriously. Weigle then hocked a diamond ring that he owned and borrowed a camera from a friend, Harold Brown, of the *Chicago Herald*.[13] Perhaps impressed by this dedication, Patterson promoted Weigle to special correspondent for the *Tribune* in 1914, and accompanied him on his trips, first to Vera Cruz and then later to Belgium, France and Germany.

Vera Cruz

If competition brought the *Chicago Tribune* into the film business, it was war that caused the newspaper to start its own film production. These war pictures were meant to be something completely new for the audience and the Chicago newspaper. It all started in April 1914 with Vera Cruz. Weigle's films and photographs first achieved prominence during the American invasion of Vera Cruz in the wake of the Tampico Incident.[14] Probably because Patterson was tipped off that something was going to happen in Vera Cruz, Weigle had already arrived there ready to film – with his borrowed camera – several weeks before the marines and navy landed on 21 April 1914. He was accompanied by Wilbur H. Durborough, a Newspaper Enterprise Association photographer, also from Chicago, whom Weigle described as his associate. When Admiral Charles J. Badger ordered the marines to land, Weigle was on the dock in Vera Cruz filming them:

> On Wednesday morning I was in the train [station], had watched a company of Mexicans embark and tried to get them to come out and pose for a picture. [Wilbur H.] Durborough rushed up breathlessly.
>
> 'For God's sake get out of here before they get you,' he gasped.
>
> 'Why so?' I wanted to know.
>
> 'Seven boatloads from the [U.S.S.] Prairie have just landed.' He answered, and we beat it towards the wharf.
>
> There Mexicans were scurrying in all directions, officials and laborers running for cover. When the marines disembarked, Durborough, [Burge?] McFall, a reporter for the Associated Press, and I were the only men left on the dock.
>
> Ten minutes after the Americans landed I saw one of our men killed. The bullet missed me by six inches. I had been taking moving pictures – the first ever taken of Americans in actual warfare – and wanted to get a snapshot of the street in the direction of the firing. Leaving the machine with Durborough I went over to a crowd of our men who were lying [sic] face downward, shooting up the street. Two of the men made room for me, and just as I crouched the man on my right reached around for a cartridge from his belt.
>
> The next second a bullet passed through his head.[15]

Weigle made some stunning still photographs, as well as films of the U. S. marines and navy landing at Vera Cruz. He filmed at the Post Office, the Hotel Terminal, and the railroad yards, and shot the shelling of the hotel and the Naval Academy by the U.S.S. *Prairie*, as well as Americans rounding up snipers and protecting refugees. To get the films back to the *Tribune* offices he placed them on one of the first rescue ships that reached Galveston on 25 April. There they were held up by quarantine regulations, but by Monday, 27 April, they were in the mail as special delivery matter. There were seven dozen films, and 74 photographs. By 18 May, Weigle's films were being shown at the Colonial and La Salle theaters in Chicago. Privately, Patterson commented that there was too little action in the films for them to be a total success, but maintained that they had promo-

Fig. 2. Belgian machine gun crew (*On Belgian Battlefields*, page 16).

tional value, and that Weigle had gained valuable experience.[16]

When war broke out in that remarkable summer of 1914, the *Chicago Tribune* immediately decided to send a group of reporters to Europe. Weigle begged his employers to go along. Apparently, he had a romantic idea of what modern war would be like. "I wanted to be where shells were flying. I wanted to move with the men who were exemplifying the highest ideals of loyalty and patriotism." Besides, he would share some of this glory if he could record this historical war on film. As it turned out, Edwin Weigle was indeed a resourceful and daring cameraman. And for the *Chicago Tribune*, he was the right man at the right place.

Belgium

On 3 August 1914, shortly after the outbreak of the war, Patterson and Weigle left Chicago for New York. In Weigle's steamer trunk were two Kodak still cameras, film footage for three hours playing time, and one cine camera, which was probably a Pathé model.[17] They sailed on the S.S. *Rotterdam* for Holland on 11 August. Their original plan was to make moving pictures in Germany, but after they crossed the border into Germany, and in spite of ten days of trying to get permissions from the German authorities, Weigle found himself forbidden to shoot motion picture film of any kind. He was allowed to shoot still pictures on 30 August during a tour authorized by the Germans at Alten Grabow, the German prison camp fifty miles outside of Berlin, and on 2 September he got a few shots of Sedan Day, from the window of his hotel room at the Adlon. But that was all. Because of their foreign appearance, the two Americans were eyed by the Germans with an unmistakable feeling of distrust. Weigle's cameras especially triggered the fear that he could be a spy. Because he was a photographer, Weigle was not allowed to join a group of correspondents who visited the recently captured forts of Liège. Finally, he decided that remaining in Germany was a waste of time and decided to go to Belgium, where the fighting was, to see if he could cover the war from the Belgian side.

The Germans crossed the Belgian border on 4 August, violating Belgian neutrality, and by 14 August had demolished the forts at Liège and Namur with their siege guns. By 24 August they headed south into France. However, although the Germans had conquered the southern part of Belgium, and were free to commence the massive leftward wheel of their armies into France, the Belgians still held northern Belgium and the great fortified city of Antwerp. As E. Alexander Powell, who wrote perhaps the best book on the siege of Antwerp, put it:

> Suppose, for the sake of having things quite clear, that you unfold the map of Belgium. Now, with your pencil, draw a line across the country from east to west, starting at the Dutch city of Maastricht and passing through Hasselt, Diest, Aerschot, Malines, Alost and Courtrai to the French frontier. This line was, roughly speaking, "the front", and for upwards of two months fighting of a more or less serious character took place along its entire length.[18]

The Germans recognized that they could not leave Antwerp, perhaps the most fortified city in the world, behind their lines and on their right flank as they headed south into France. If there were any doubt of that, the Belgians quickly attacked the Germans at a number of sectors on the front, such as Aerschot, Malines and Termonde. There was also the possibility that the British could use Antwerp as a base for a later assault on the Germans. The Germans determined to capture Antwerp and the rest of Belgium to their north and west. To do so, they had to capture the villages and other strong points surrounding Antwerp so that they would be close enough to use their massive 30.5 and 42 cm. siege guns. It was obvious that the fight for Antwerp was going to be a big story in the fall of 1914.

Since Germany and Britain forbade war correspondents to cover the war from their territories, Belgium, and especially Antwerp, became a magnet for war correspondents. Belgium was putting up very much of a scrap. It had suffered greatly from German

atrocities in its defenseless cities and upon unarmed civilians, and in the process had gained much respect and sympathy throughout the world. It was here that Weigle and Patterson started their war.

As earlier in Germany, it quickly turned out that besides being killed or wounded, the chief danger for correspondents in covering the war in Belgium was getting shot as spies, or arrested and deported. To get to Belgium, Weigle first went to neutral Holland on 3 September. At the Hague, he got a visa for Belgium. But since visas and passports did not cut much ice with military authorities in wartime emergency conditions, as an extra precaution he got a "special pass" that stated that he was a messenger for the U.S. Government. At Capellen, the Belgian frontier guards noticed his camera equipment. Once again, the authorities suspected the American to be a spy and confiscated his cameras. Weigle showed them his special pass and promised the guards that they could seal all his equipment in a trunk, which was probably a good excuse to get himself out of a sticky situation. He also promised he would report to military headquarters, but instead went straight to Antwerp, thus reaching his final destination.

Given that the Belgians and Germans had more important things to worry about than war correspondents, and that they were justifiably worried about spies, the correspondents were indeed in a precarious, and often dangerous situation. They all complained of the many times they were detained, their cameras or film destroyed or confiscated, and described the resourcefulness they needed to convince the Germans and Belgians that they were journalists representing a neutral country. Donald C. Thompson, another cinematographer and photographer in Antwerp, who ended up working with E. Alexander Powell (who also was in Antwerp as a correspondent for the New York *World*) said he was arrested eight times.[19] Even Joseph Patterson got arrested in Westphalia.

Weigle was at first pleased to have finally reached Antwerp, and was sure that there were no remaining obstacles to his filming. He was wrong. When he talked to American Vice Consul Spencer, Spencer said there was no hope of getting permission to film with the Belgian forces. The previous week, Spencer had tried to get Irwin S. Cobb and Frederick Palmer permission to go to the Belgian front and had been refused by the Foreign Office. Weigle did not know what to do. He tried to get some help from Powell, who had excellent official connections in Belgium. For unknown reasons, he turned Weigle down flat.

Weigle then had an inspiration. What if half the proceeds of the *Tribune* film were to go to the Belgian Red Cross? Weigle went back to Vice Consul Spencer, who thought it was a great idea. The Belgian military liked the scheme as well, and the whole plan was finally approved by General Victor de Guise, Chief Commander of the fortified position of Antwerp. Weigle got a document with his photograph, code letters, and the seal of Belgium upon it, but he was disappointed to find that the document only allowed him to take motion pictures of Antwerp and of German prisoners. Still, he was pleased. He wired Patterson in Berlin, who congratulated Weigle and decided to make the deal formal. They went to the Belgian Red Cross and wrote up a binding contract. The Red Cross also agreed to furnish Weigle and Patterson an automobile and chauffeur. In addition, they received official passes to take motion pictures or still photographs anywhere in Belgium, which of course delighted Weigle.[20]

Weigle spent his first few days in Antwerp in September photographing Notre Dame Cathedral and shooting film of the pontoon bridge over the River Scheldt, over which much of the population of Antwerp, as well as the Belgian and British armies, would escape into Holland when the Germans finally seized Antwerp in October. After Weigle and Patterson got permission to photograph and shoot film anywhere in Belgium, they began covering the series of battles taking place in and around Antwerp as the Germans closed in. They would leave Antwerp in the morning by car, visit some hot spot where they would photograph and write dispatches, then return in the evening to Antwerp and the Hotel St. Antoine. In this way they covered the battles of Termines, Alost, Aerschot, Lierre and Malines. Weigle filmed burning houses at Alost and at Lierre, which had been deliberately flooded by the Belgians. According to Weigle, his first pictures of actual combat were filmed near Termonde. He had placed his motion picture camera in an abandoned house, about 200 meters from the Belgian line, when suddenly the Germans opened fire. The Belgians retreated under a hail of bullets. Patterson, who usually carried the heavy film equipment, urged Weigle – who was now carrying the camera and tripod – to dump all the camera equipment in a ditch. Said Weigle: "I kept on taking motion pictures until the Germans were too close for safety. Then I followed after the Belgians."[21]

Fig. 3. Weigle filming in the *Herald Tribune* car (*On Belgian Battlefields*, page 24).

On 15 September Weigle and Patterson decided to go to Termonde, where there was supposedly a battle in progress, but the worst of the fighting had taken place before they got there:

> The scenes at Termonde were pathetic. Dead bodies of soldiers and of women and children were to be seen lying [sic] in the streets ... . At one point I noticed a wretched-looking woman coming along pushing a wheelbarrow. As she neared me I saw a body in the wheelbarrow. It was her child – a boy of seven. He had been struck by a fragment of shrapnel. His body was terribly torn. We spoke to the woman. She was under the impression that her son was still partially alive and she was taking him where he might be saved. We did not tell her that all life had already passed out of the limp body in the wheelbarrow even though our eyes told us that her son – her only son – was dead ... . While I took motion pictures at Termonde, I was unable to get "motion" pictures in the full sense of the word; because life had passed out. Only still death was visible.[22]

Then Weigle and Patterson got into trouble again. Patterson had written a story that was published in the *Tribune*, and also cabled to the *London Times*, which the Belgians deemed pro-German. On 2 October, when the story reached General De Guise, he had Patterson and Weigle arrested and their camera equipment and film confiscated. The American Consul managed to get them out of jail and the Belgians returned their equipment and belongings, but the next day Patterson decided to leave Antwerp for Berlin, and took the film that they had shot with him to send on to Chicago. Weigle decided to stay in Antwerp for a while.

Antwerp was surrounded by twelve forts, and in addition the Belgians had made the whole area around the city a fortified zone. It was considered to be impregnable to direct assault. But the Germans had no intention of a direct assault on Antwerp. In the series of smaller battles that Patterson and Weigle had witnessed, the Germans had gotten close enough to the city to begin to shell the forts with their terrible mortars, and use smaller guns to shell the city directly. On 6 October the Germans began to shell Antwerp. The bombardment was fearsome. The Germans used their Krupp 42 and 30.5 centimeter guns. The 42 cm gun was capable of throwing a projectile sixteen and a half inches in diameter and weighing nearly a ton 27,900 feet – over five miles. Each projectile contained 300 pounds of powder.[23] It was these weapons that made short work of the Belgian works at Liège and Namur and would destroy the forts surrounding Antwerp. Antwerp soon became a ghost town, the inhabitants huddled in their homes or already fleeing across the Scheldt towards Holland on the pontoon bridge, the only escape route toward neutral Holland. The Hotel St. Antoine, where Weigle and many other correspondents were staying, closed due to the barrage, and Weigle, feeling

blue anyway since Patterson had left, was on his own. Donald C. Thomson had rented a pleasant house at 74 rue du Péage, and he invited E.E. Hunt, a correspondent for *Colliers Weekly* who later became active in Belgian War Relief, to stay with him, Weigle and D.H. de Meister, the Dutch vice consul. Unfortunately, the house was located in the southeast quarter of Antwerp, closest to the German guns. Thompson had planted a large American flag in front of the building. Hunt later described the destruction of the house at 74 rue du Péage that night:

> I was awakened by a tremendous roar and a shock which seemed to lift the house from its foundations. Immediately there came a distant *boom!* A shrill snarling whistle, then another explosion which pounded the air like storm.
>
> *Boom – wheeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeieieieieie kkkkkkkkBANGGGG G! – Boom – wheeeeeeeeeee EEEEEEEIEIEIEIEIE KKKKKKKK BANGGGGGGGGG!*
>
> Every pane of glass in the house blew out in the chaos which followed the bursting of that fourth bomb. It had hit directly across the street, less than thirty five feet from where I was hurrying into my clothes. I could hear screams and sobs; then the sound of people rushing by the house, then the rash of glass which littered the sidewalks splintering to bits as the people ran. But above every other sound clamored the continuous mad-dog snarling of the German shells ... .[24]

Weigle and the others decided to take refuge in the coal cellar in the basement, the safest place they could find in the building, and blocked the door with mattresses. Antwerp was shelled the rest of the night by German 28 cm guns working in batteries of four.

> The next thing that happened was the falling of a mass of debris, which we knew represented the top of our building crumbling in. It followed immediately after a volley of shot. We could hear brick and other material pounding on the door of our sub-cellar. Pieces of the debris forced their way through the door and embedded themselves in the mattresses. We did not dare to get out. We could only stay there and wait until death came.
>
> We waited and waited. The hours passed slowly. We watched the minutes pass. Suddenly at 3:30 in the afternoon, a shell struck our house with deadly crash. The entire building tumbled. Debris poured in. The dust and smoke, from the burning matter above, were suffocating. The air was clouded with smoke. We felt sure that we would smother and burn to death if we did not get out. We decided to get out rather than being burned alive.[25]

When Weigle and the others got out of the building, now unofficially known as Fort Thompson, they were amazed to see clear blue sky. Their abode, along with a whole row of houses across the street, was destroyed. They had been in the building for something like fifteen hours. Weigle grabbed his camera, by some miracle unscathed by the bombardment, and ran as fast as he could in the opposite direction of the shelling. The Hotel St. Antoine was intact, but the Hotel de L'Europe was on fire. Notre Dame Cathedral was untouched. The Queen hotel was deserted, except for several members of the staff. Weigle went to the roof:

> I rushed to the roof of the Hotel Queen with my camera. Here was a beautiful sight. The entire portion of Antwerp, from which we had come, was in flames. I also secured some splendid views of the Belgian and British armies fleeing over the pontoon bridge which extended across the River Scheldt. It was awe-inspiring to see those thousands of people rushing from Antwerp as the sun went down.[26]

At 11 o'clock the next morning, the Germans entered the city. Weigle grabbed a tug and crossed the Scheldt into Holland, filming Belgian refugees in Kieldrecht. From there, he got to Rotterdam via the Hague. Then, from London, he arrived in New York on the S.S. *Philadelphia* on 25 October, and was back in Chicago by 26 October.

There is one story about Weigle's coverage in Antwerp, mentioned both by Weigle and Patterson, which could not be told until after Antwerp fell.[27] There had been gossip that the Belgians had a machine gun in the tower of Notre Dame Cathedral in Antwerp, which would give the Germans an excellent excuse for shelling the cathedral. The Belgians had no machine gun but did have a telescope. When Weigle and Patterson first arrived in Antwerp, Weigle shot a photograph showing Belgian aviation scouts observing and reporting German activities around

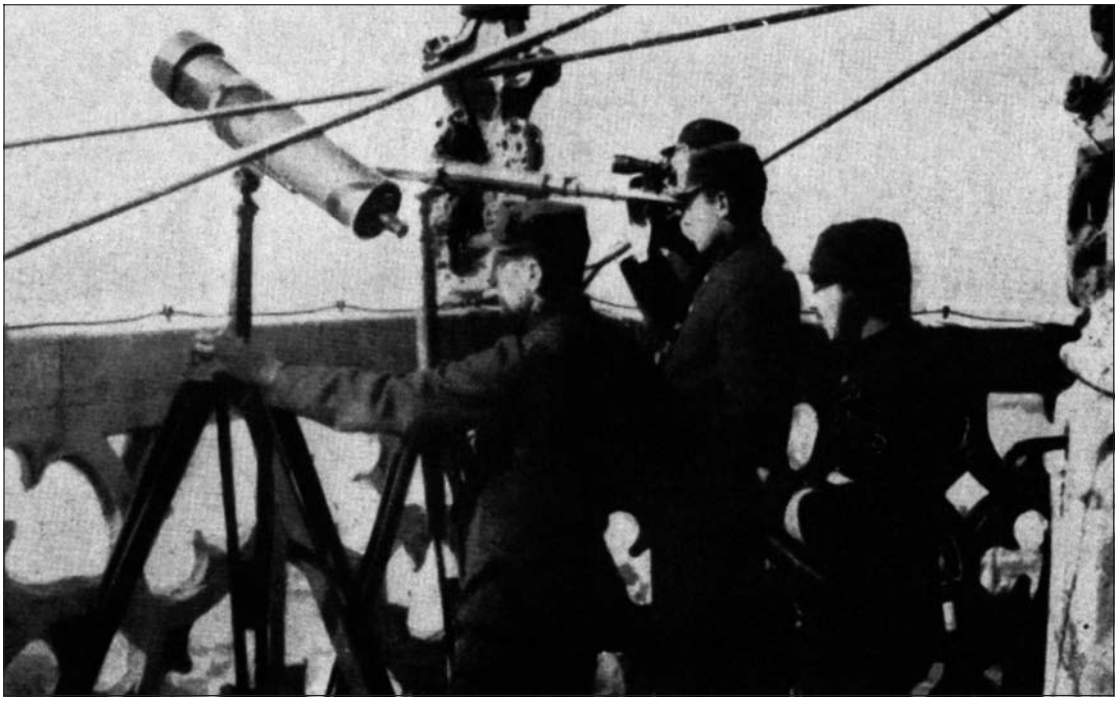

Fig. 4. The photograph that may have saved Notre Dame Cathedral in Antwerp (*On Belgian Battlefields*, page 28).

the city in the cathedral tower. When Patterson left Antwerp, he took a copy of the photograph with him and sent it to the *Tribune*, which caused a real problem. If the *Tribune* published the photograph, the Germans would have proof that the tower was being used for military purposes. On the other hand, if Patterson telegraphed the *Tribune* and told the paper not to run it, it would be proof to the Belgians and Germans that the photograph existed. E. Alexander Powell apparently came to the rescue. He told the story, and showed the photograph, to the Belgians, who sent him to the Germans promising that the Belgian scouts would be removed if the Germans would spare the cathedral. The Germans agreed. As a result, all scouts were removed from the tower, saving it from destruction.

On 14 November, Weigle's film *On the Belgian Battlefields* opened at the elegant Romanesque Studebaker Theatre in Chicago. It was a success. According to the *Tribune*, an admittedly biased source, on the first day over 8,000 people jammed the theater, hundreds had to be turned away, and special police had to hold back to crowds on Michigan Avenue.[28] The exhibitor at the Studebaker said in the trade press that he was surprised by the success of the *Chicago Tribune* war pictures. It was announced on 5 December that the exhibition would be prolonged for another week. Distribution of the film also apparently went well. The Central Film Company, which owned the distribution rights, announced on 19 November 1914 that Ohio had brought in $10,000. New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania generated another $25,000.[29] Patterson later estimated that the film made $60,000 in net profits.[30]

When *On Belgian Battlefields* was screened for an exhibitors' preview in New York, *Variety* reported that the film was received with somewhat lukewarm feelings. Most of the scenes looked like familiar newsreel pictures: wrecked buildings, inspections near the front, refugees fleeing from the front line, and the like. Even though the reviewer found no reason to suppose scenes had been reconstructed for the camera, the overwhelming impression was that this movie looked "fakey".[31] The disappointment of the film trade people was due to several reasons. At least one of them was the blazing publicity given to Weigle's film by the *Tribune's* copywriters. According to *Variety*, scenes of combat were extremely limited. In one particular sequence the audience saw a group of Belgian soldiers in the trenches near Malines while under fire. Some of the wounded were seen being replaced by new soldiers. "Mere scenes of unpeopled wreck [sic] are rather disappointing when one's expectations have been aroused to the point of looking for a visualisation of war's actual clash and con-

flict."[32] The name of the *Tribune* ("The Greatest Newspaper in the World") appeared on the credits and intertitles. Therefore, as far as *Variety* was concerned, the film was mainly a publicity drive for the *Chicago Tribune*. This seems an odd criticism, considering most film intertitles of the time listed the names of the studio and producer in as large letters as possible.

Nevertheless, from the commercial point of view, the film – one of the first war documentaries shown in the United States – was a remarkable success. There were various reasons. First, the film had an official stamp which was prominent in the *Tribune's* advertisements. A lot of attention was given to Patterson's contract with the Belgian Red Cross. In one of the press releases, Van Langermeesch – the head of the Red Cross – was even described as representing the Belgian Military authorities. Apparently, the *Chicago Tribune* had the exclusive right to shoot the Great War in Belgium: "The undersigned of the first party [The Red Cross] agrees to grant to no one his authorisation to take cinematographic views of theatre of war".[33] Even assuming that this was part of the deal – which can reasonably be doubted – there were in fact several photographers active at the same time in Belgium, and they all had a permit at hand. But the *Chicago Tribune* had one major advantage. By closing this contract with the Belgian Red Cross, the company showed that the film was unquestionably authentic. Given so many "actual" war pictures that were faked or revamped, this was indeed a substantial asset.

Second, and even more important, the film supported a popular cause. In the early days of World War I many Americans had a great deal of sympathy for "poor little Belgium", the neutral country that had been brutally overrun by the German Army, and they remembered Reich Chancellor Theodor von Bethmann-Hollweg's colossally stupid remark that the treaty guaranteeing Belgian neutrality was a mere scrap of paper. This made many Americans think twice about the tragic fate of Belgium. All together the *Chicago Tribune* collected $20,540 for the Belgian Red Cross. The Belgian consul in Chicago declared that the exhibition of *On Belgian Battlefields* was an important factor in winning the hearts of Chicagoans for his country, worth far more than the money.[34] It may be argued that this was hypocritical of the *Tribune*; in *Notebook of a Neutral*, Patterson had maintained that Belgium should be put under the permanent military control of France.[35]

Fig. 5. "Edwin F. Weigle leaving the Chicago Tribune Office for Germany". *The German Side of the War*. [Frame grab, courtesy John E. Allen.]

Germany and Austria-Hungary

Soon Weigle was again on his way to Europe. Weigle and Donald C. Thompson sailed to Europe on the *Adriatic* with Robert R. McCormick of the *Tribune* on 10 February 1915. After having been detained in Britain, Weigle and the others finally sailed from Hull to Rotterdam on the steamer *Kirkman Abbey*, sailing along the coast of England until they reached Yarmouth. The ship anchored there and everyone slept in his life jacket. The next day the passengers saw three floating mines within twenty-five miles, and there was a betting pool that the ship would not reach Rotterdam. But they finally arrived, reaching Germany on 5 March. Weigle again stayed at the Adlon in Berlin, and presented the letters that he had received in Washington from Count von Bernstorff, the German ambassador to the United States. Weigle was given a dinner by the German General Staff. Among the other guests were Ali Pasha of the Turkish general staff, Baron Hoffman, and Lieutenant Victor D. Herbster, United States naval attaché at the German embassy[36]

However, while the Germans were hospitable, Weigle had as much trouble getting out of Berlin to photograph the war as he did on his first trip. He spent his time photographing around Berlin, mostly describing the high morale of its citizens and the ample foodstuffs and materiel that Germany claimed it still possessed in spite of the British blockade. It was not until Weigle repeated the idea that he had used with the Belgians that he had any success. He approached the Austro-Hungarians, and suggested that if the Austro-Hungarian government would give him passports to the front, he would agree to give

Fig. 6. "The effect of a twenty-four centimeter gun on a fort at Przemysl". *The German Side of the War*. [Frame grab, courtesy John E. Allen.]

half the proceeds of his film to the Austro-German Crippled Soldiers' Fund. Austro-Hungarian Field Marshal von Schleyer agreed, and on 6 May Weigle got his passports for the front. From sources in Vienna, the Viennese gave him footage of the siege guns in action, the mobilisation at the outbreak of the war, and even some pictures of Kaiser Wilhelm – probably the ones of the Kaiser in Vienna in Austrian uniform later shown in his films.[37]

Weigle arrived in Charleville, Kaiser Wilhelm's Imperial headquarters, on 6 May. That night a French aviator bombed the Kaiser's headquarters, and Weigle reported that the Germans later dropped 500 shells on Rheims in retaliation. Weigle also visited the 1870 battlefield of Sedan, where he met his fellow *Tribune* correspondent James O'Donnell Bennett. With a group of other newspapermen they were given an excellent dinner, with printed menus, while sitting in the German trenches with the French positions only a few hundred feet away. On 8 May, Weigle went to St. Quentin, then to Péronne. In his book, he mentions the white, chalky stone and the extremely complex series of fortifications that the Germans were able to construct in it. In fact, Weigle was at the Somme, which was then a very quiet sector (probably why the Germans took him there), but from 1 July 1916, partly because of those murderous German fortifications, was destined to become the site of one of the bloodiest campaigns in the war.[38]

On 1 May 1915, a German/Austro-Hungarian Army under the command of Field Marshal von Mackensen initiated the Gorlice – Tarnow campaign against the Russians on the southwestern Galician front, an operation which, in tandem with an attack eastward by a large German force under the command of Hindenburg and Ludendorff further north on the Narew River, was to drive the Russians out of Poland.[39] On 3 June, the fortress of Przemysl, previously the lynchpin of Austro-Hungarian defenses on the River San, fell once again, reverting to the Austrians. By this time there was very little left of the original Austro-Hungarian defenses. Weigle and James O'Donnell Bennett were both at Przemysl, as well as Tarnow and Hill 419, where the German and Austrian troops had broken through the Russian lines on 2 May.[40] He captured pictures of the artillery bombardment of Przemysl with a special telescopic lens, and also filmed the victorious Germans resting on what was left of the fortress.

Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary on 23 May 1915. Weigle left Vienna for the Trentino on 13 June, so was present in the opening rounds between the Austrians and Italians in the South Tyrol. He visited Lake Garda, which a few weeks before had been a major tourist attraction for visitors from all over the world. Now Weigle could not find a sign of life. He traveled through the Tyrolean Alps and witnessed the heavy artillery rearranging the landscape.

Weigle returned to Vienna and showed his film to the censor, who approved it, and gave Weigle a passport. It must have been some passport, because when he reached Warnemunde, an exit point from Germany which was very strict, the authorities never even asked him to open his suitcase. From Germany, Weigle went to Copenhagen and sailed for New York on the *Frederik VIII*. He arrived in New York on 3 August 1915, exactly one year from the date of his first arrival in the war zone.[41]

The German Side of the War opened in Chicago on 28 August 1915, and was shown both at the Studebaker Theater and at the Bismarck Gardens, a comfortable old German beer garden in the Lakeview district of the city. The best short description of Weigle's trip and the film is one that was written by Weigle himself in a theater program made for the showing. It describes the contents of the film (much of the prose seems to be directly from the intertitles), and also demonstrates Weigle's pro-German stance.[42] Weigle had returned to Chicago during the first week in August, 1915. On 17 August, between his first and second trip to Germany, the *Tribune* released a short film directed by Weigle entitled *Racing the Deadline on the Chicago Tribune.* While the story – how the *Tribune* gets a great scoop on a crime – was fictitious, the cast of characters was not, featuring, among others, the Pulitzer-Prize winning

cartoonist John T. McCutcheon, States Attorney Maclay Hoyne, and Bert Leston Taylor, the creator of "Line-O-Type", a humorous feature in the newspaper.[43] If Weigle made this film between 3 August and 17 August, he was indeed a fast worker.

Weigle showed *The German Side of the War* at the Forty-Fourth Street Theater in New York in September of 1915, where every performance was sold out. Weigle lectured between showings. Because the billboards suggested that this show would be a one-day only presentation, more than 5,000 people gathered before 11 am on 20 September, the first performance. According to the *New York Times*, mainly German-Americans had assembled to see this film. Scalpers started selling fake tickets to the people in line, many of whom could not speak much English, and extra policeman were called to keep order. The line at times reached all the way from the theater to Broadway. Weigle's film attracted a record number of visitors for the Forty-Fourth Street theater: 8,555 persons on a single day. Just that first day the film was shown eight times. Receipts were $14, 972.[44] During its first run in New York *The German Side of the War* generated $32,000. Sales of distribution rights brought in an extra $56,000. The reason for this substantial financial spinoff was, according to *Variety*, the intensive publicity campaign by the *Chicago Tribune*. A correspondent for *Variety* noted:

> Exchange advertising between the Chicago *Tribune* and the New York papers gave the pictures a tremendous quantity of publicity. It is said the *Tribune* is practically satisfied with the advertising it is securing; which allows F. Ziegfeld Jr. who has the war film under his direction for New York, a large margin of profits on the return.[45]

Despite its commercial success, *Variety* and the *New York Times* remained critical about the film. Not even a complete battalion of German troopers would have outdone the wild applause given to the pictures of the Kaiser, wrote the *Times* reviewer. *Variety* also noted the pro-German message, but took a more professional approach to the movie. "These war pictures are no more, no nearer 'war scenes' than any of the others that have preceded."[46] The trade paper drew attention to scenes that had apparently been reconstructed for the camera. According to the reviewer, in one scene where German soldiers were seen hiding from an air attack in a dense forest the pilot could have not seen them anyway, which could only mean that the scene was a fake. As a movie, according to *Variety*, *The German Side of the War* was not much more than a standard newsreel. The reason that it was a hit was because it cashed in on the interest of so many German-Americans in and around New York and Chicago in seeing their fatherland in action.

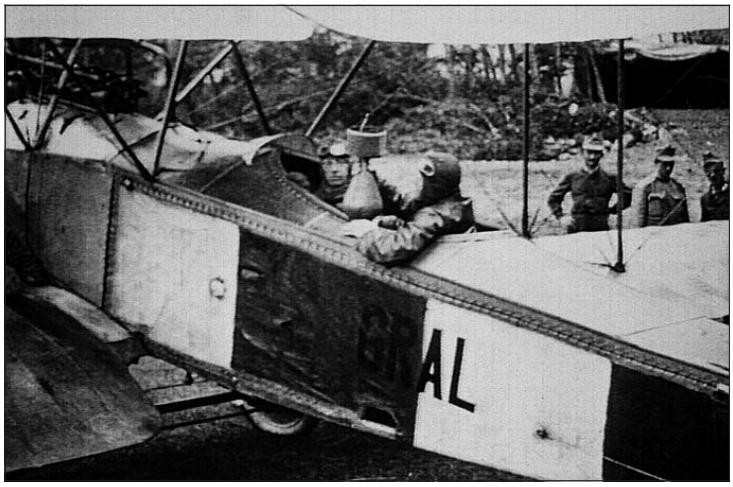

Fig. 7. "Capt. Steiner, an Austrian aviator, later undertook to sail his aeroplane over the alps and drop bombs on the Italians. He never returned." *The German Side of the War*. [Frame grab, courtesy John E. Allen.]

Weigle set sail in November 1915 to return to the fighting. Patterson wrote two letters of recommendation for him, along with a check for $20,000 for the blind and crippled soldiers' fund of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and said that the *Tribune* would make further payments in the near future. One letter was to General Max Hoehn of the *Kriegspressequartier* in Teschen, Austria, the other to an unknown person whom Patterson addressed as "Your Excellency".[47] On the western front, Weigle was stationed with Prince Rupprecht's Bavarians in the Sixth Army Corps in France, where he was based in Lille. Weigle said that in the Fromelles region he witnessed and photographed the demolition of French positions – the Germans had been mining and had buried tons of high explosive under the French trenches for weeks. The explosion, which filled the sky with clumps of earth and body parts, left a hole thirty or forty feet deep, and Weigle had no idea how many French soldiers died:

> It is not a pretty thing to see a 300 yard trench full of soldiers blown up by a mine. At the moment of course you are busy with your moving picture camera, for the chance to take such a picture does not come often. But afterwards you get to thinking about it.[48]

About seventy-five surviving French came run-

THE GERMAN SIDE OF THE WAR
Story of the Films and Their Taking
THE pictures comprising these five reels of sensational War Films, depicting the German side of the war are indicative of the activities of Mr. Edwin F. Weigle, Chicago TRIBUNE'S Staff Photographer, on his second trip into the European war zones.
Shortly after Europe burst into flames, figuratively speaking, Mr. Weigle went to Belgium from where he brought back enough material, in the way of motion pictures, to give to this half of the world a vivid idea of what actually was going on across the water. Weigle's Belgian War Pictures caused wide comment.
These new TRIBUNE pictures, however, are even more vivid than those which Mr. Weigle obtained in Belgium. For on this second expedition the photographer knew what conditions were and went fully equipped. In his kit was a specially made war camera, the lens of which was constructed so as to bring events from a distance apparently to the foreground. Experts who have viewed these photographs declare them to be the most authentic and real war films ever taken. They actually bring the war activities of the vast Teuton armies right before your eyes.
(Continued)
E. F. Weigle Tribune Photographer at the Front
Germans in Trench before Przemysl
Operating Aeroplane Gun
Cheerful under Difficulties
Austrian Red Cross Nurse at Work
Climbing the Tyrolean Alps
A Corner of a Trench
Austrian Troops in Commanding Position
Austrian Infantry in Swamp Region

Fig. 8. Theater program for *The German Side of the War*. [Cooper Graham private collection.]

ning in terror to give themselves up. The Germans allowed Weigle to keep the film of the surrendering French, but confiscated the rest of the film, telling Weigle that he could have it after the war was over. This may mean that some of Weigle's footage is in the Bundesarchiv in Berlin. Weigle was in the German trenches on Christmas Eve, 1915, in a cathedral tower at Laon. He also photographed at Douai, Lens, Messines and Fromelles, so he apparently was in the Artois region, somewhat north of the Somme and south of Ypres. Although he was on the western front at the right time, he did not apparently witness any of the battle of Verdun.

After Lille and the western front came a trip to Russia and the trenches near Riga. Here he saw the Russian attacks, many of them without any preliminary artillery fire, and some of the charging men actually without rifles.[49] To get his war footage back to America, Weigle obtained 1,000 feet of scrap film to produce when the British authorities searched him, which sure enough they confiscated. Weigle had hidden his real war film on the *Bergensfjord*, on which he returned to the United States on 16 June 1916.

According to the advertising, *The German Side of the War* (Second Series) contained: anti-aircraft artillery firing on an airplane; the famous wooden statue of Hindenburg in Berlin, into which one could drive nails of gold, silver and iron, the fees being turned over to the Red Cross; a cavalry charge on a Russian village, probably the one described above; first aid hospitals at the front; the Kaiser in Austrian uniform in Vienna; an advance under smoke bombs; the hurling of hand grenades; the German training camp at Frankfurt am Main; ruined cities in France; and the firing of a 30.5 centimeter gun in action.[50] The film settled in for an extended run at the Colonial Theatre in Chicago, and Weigle once again lectured between showings, as well as working in the projection booth.

Signal Corps

When the United States entered the Great War in 1917, Patterson wrote Weigle a hearty recommendation for military service.[51] Charles Hart of the Committee on Public Information arranged for Weigle and W.H. Durborough to join the Army Signal Corps. A Signal Corps photographic division was established with the following personnel: Major James Barnes, Major Bert E. Underwood, Captain Charles E. Betz, First Lieutenant Edwin F. Weigle, First Lieutenant Edward J. Steichen, and First Lieutenant Albert K. Dawson.[52] Weigle was among some extremely prominent photographers. Bert Underwood was one of the famous Underwood Brothers, who as Underwood & Underwood pioneered the marketing of stereoscopic photographs, and later the sale of photographs to newspapers and press associations. Edward J. Steichen was already a famous photographer who had been a major innovator of the Photo Secession movement in New York. He later changed his approach to photography to a crisper style and became, among many other things, a famous military photographer. He directed *The Fighting Lady* for the U.S. Navy in World War II. On a sadder note, Albert K. Dawson was dismissed from the army when it was found that he had worked for the American Correspondents Film Company, secretly funded by the Germans. Weigle was one of three officers assigned to organize the photographic division of the U.S. Army. He was first assigned to the aviation section, then in June of 1918 was ordered to duty in France.[53]

Between 28 September 1918 and 15 January 1919, Weigle was the Photographic Officer attached to the 35th Division, a national guard unit made up

Fig. 9. 1st Lieutenant Edwin Weigle, Sig. R. C. and famed explorer Dr. Carl Akeley, inspecting Akeley Motion Picture Camera. 111-SC 1503. National Archives. The Signal Corps patented a version of the Akeley camera.

of Kansans and Missourians formed in August 1917. Among its soldiers was a future President, Harry S. Truman, who commanded Battery D of the 129th Field Artillery. The 35th was at the Meuse-Argonne offensive, and due to a combination of inexperience, incompetence, and a confrontation with the troops of the First and Fifth Prussian Guards, suffered 7,300 casualties. The Division collapsed and was removed from the front on 1 October 1918 after five days on the line. Weigle photographed the Meuse-Argonne offensive before the 35th was transferred to the Verdun sector on 1 October, although his film does not apparently capture the horror of the Division's fate. He later wrote that he filmed 14,000 feet of film which was "a fair historical record of the 35th Division".[54]

Weigle stayed in France until February 1919, and arrived back in Chicago as a Signal Corps Captain on 12 June 1919.[55] Unlike Albert Dawson, he had no security problems despite having filmed intensively in Germany and Austria. He received nothing but glowing reports from his superiors in the Signal Corps, and was made responsible for 110 miles of Signal Corps film being brought to Washington from Europe after the war. Weigle said about 15,000 feet of the film had been devoted to General Pershing, "much to the General's disgust".[56]

Ireland

Back from the wars, Weigle returned to Illinois and married Florence (Marshall) Johnson on 4 May 1920. She was the daughter of John Erwin Marshall of Highland Park, one of the founders of the Middleby Marshall Oven Company. Weigle moved to Deerfield, an affluent suburb on the North Shore, where he became the secretary and treasurer for the company.[57] Florence had seen Weigle in Minneapolis in January 1917 where he was lecturing with his film on Germany.[58] Previously married, she had a daughter named Lorraine who was part of the Weigle household until at least 1930. Judging from a picture by Weigle, Florence had piercing dark eyes and a determined chin; she was a not untalented writer.

Together, the Weigles came up with the idea of traveling to Ireland and making *Ireland in Revolt*, a film about the troubles, and once again the trip was underwritten by the *Chicago Tribune*. To exploit the previous Weigle films, Patterson and the *Tribune* had set up corporations, such as The International Motion Picture Company for *On Belgian Battlefields,* and Indian Film Company for *The German Side of the War*. In this case an informal agreement was reached whereby three *Tribune* executives, Samuel Emory Thomason, William H. Field and Max Annenberg, would get ten percent each of the profits, if any, from the film, and the *Tribune* would get the rest.[59] Florence M. Weigle wrote the script, and later wrote *Ireland as It Is Today*, a book based on the script describing their trip and the making of the film. The copy of the book at the Library of Congress contains her original handwritten dedication to President

TROOPS ON OLD PARK ROAD—THE MUSTARD-POT, ANTICIPATING TROUBLE FROM THE NATIONALIST QUARTER

Fig. 10. The "Mustard Pot" in Belfast (*Ireland as It Is Today*, page 33).

Wilson, "Trusting this may be of some interest to our President, Respectfully, Florence M. Weigle".

The film, and Mrs. Weigle's book, are pro-Sinn Fein, and while the book acknowledges that Britain was caught in a tough spot between Ulster and Ireland, there is very little doubt that the film and the book are decidedly against the British position in Ireland – in particular the British use of the thuggish Black and Tans and the Irish Royal Constabulary. The Weigles interviewed in glowing terms Arthur Griffith and Desmond Fitzgerald, chief of propaganda for the Sinn Fein, who gave them all the help he could.

The film was far from a honeymoon voyage. Weigle found himself in some spots as tough as anything in Europe, and several times was lucky to get away from confrontations with his film and his skin. One particularly hot spot they visited was Ballymacarret, an eastern district in Belfast where it had been reported that Protestants were killing the Catholics and burning them out:

> As Ed took his place behind the camera ready to turn the crank, a portion of the mob began to gather around him bristling with distrust: "What are you doing here?" "What is your religion?" they shouted. He tried to evade the question as the ever swelling mob pressed closer to him, screaming that they would smash him and his camera to a thousand bits if he did not answer them. He tried to temporize, "Well I guess I have no set religion. I am just an American", for by that time he was realizing that if he answered he was a Protestant and those nearest him in the mob were of Catholic persuasion, that they would quickly dispose of him, or that if he professed Catholicism for reasons of possible safety the surrounding mob might be Protestant and act in accordance with their customs and if there were equal numbers of both sets surrounding him, then he was a goner for sure.

In this case Weigle chose discretion over valour, grabbed his camera and returned to his car, followed by cries of "Go back to America and take Dr. Mannix with you".[60] Weigle did later get a little footage in Ballymacarret, and then filmed in an equally troubled area called the Marrowbone in Belfast, also called the "Mustard Pot" because things often became very fiery in the vicinity.

After the Weigles returned to Chicago the film opened at the Randolph Theater on 15 December 1920, and subsequently played in cities where there was a large Irish population. Perhaps predictably, when the film was shown to the Chicago Board of Censors, who loved it, other enthusiastic spectators were the newly appointed Chief of Police Charles C. Fitzmorris and Michael J. Faherty, former president of the Irish Fellowship Club.[61] *Variety* also gave it a highly favorable review, the only Weigle film it ever really praised.[62]

Peacetime

After his return from Ireland it becomes more difficult to find traces of Edwin F. Weigle. His name showed up in the *Tribune* in 1921 when he sold a fifteen-flat building for $33,000, a considerable sum at the time, and he gave some money to a Tribune-Legion Fund charity in 1925. His daughter-in-law Lorraine married Hubert N. Kelley, newspaperman, author and religious writer, as well as manager of the Middleby Marshall Company.[63] Weigle and Kelley were both prominent in Saint Gregory's Episcopal Church in Deerfield, Illinois, and instrumental in founding it. And so, Weigle dropped out of cinematography and into the world of commerce and the suburban life.

The immediate reason for Weigle's change in direction was a disastrous trip that the Weigles undertook for Robert McCormick of the *Tribune*. Colonel McCormick had been buying tracts of lumber in Canada so the *Tribune* would never run out of paper if there was a strike or some other problem. According to a series of letters from Florence to her mother and daughter, he evidently got the idea to commission the Weigles to make a film about the lumber

drive in Franquelin and Baie des Cedres in Quebec province in the spring of 1921. It was a disaster. Weigle fell through the ice, lost a camera and all his film, and evidently the Weigles quit in disgust at the appalling conditions and difficulties in filming. This appears to be the end of Weigle's career with the *Tribune*.

But it is easy to imagine other reasons for Weigle's change in direction. One may have been that there seemed little place for film correspondents after World War I. The *Chicago Tribune* had done some splendid business with Weigle's films. On top of his war features the company had also produced a number of other news films. This line of production ended in 1916, when Robert R. McCormick began to look for a new journalistic approach.[64] All this led him to sign a contract in December 1915 with film producer William N. Selig. The result was the *Selig Tribune*, a bi-weekly newsreel described in its publicity as: "... a REEL NEWSPAPER which will reach the movie fans while the news on the reel is real news." According to the hype, it was to feature hundreds of cameramen under the supervision of Weigle.[65] The *Selig Tribune* did not prove to be the success the producers had hoped for, and after one year the *Selig Tribune* stopped production. But if newsreels were the coming thing – in a cinematic sense a form of mass production – where did people like Weigle and Donald Thompson fit in?

In 1919 Joseph Medill Patterson had founded the *New York Daily News*. In 1925 he left the management of the *Tribune* to his cousin Bertie and Colonel Robert R. McCormick, and went to New York to make a great success of the new paper. For a while the *News* was somewhat progressive, but the paper changed. While Patterson was still maverick enough to support Franklin Delano Roosevelt in his first two terms, he turned against Roosevelt when Roosevelt's policies toward Japan and Nazi Germany became increasingly interventionist. Patterson had never lost his isolationist tendencies, and he and his sister, Eleanor Patterson, as well as Bertie McCormick all became increasingly anti-New Deal and isolationist to the point of obsession. After a long and successful career, Patterson died on 26 May 1946.

Considering the close personal and professional relationship that Weigle had enjoyed with Joseph Patterson, it seems odd that Patterson did not take him along when he left the *Tribune,* even if only as a photographer. But Patterson was more than well served at the *News* by the celebrated photographer Edward Jackson. There does not even seem to be an obituary for Weigle, who is listed in the Social Security Death Index as having died on 1 August 1973.

The films

If Weigle disappeared from sight, so did a lot of his films. So far, there is no trace of *The Battle of Vera Cruz*, *On the Belgian Battlefield*, or *Ireland in Revolt*. The prospect is brighter for *The German Side of the War*. The Library of Congress has the last several hundred feet of the film, frame enlargements of which have been included in this article.[66] In addition, the John E. Allen Archives has part of the film as well. Whether enough of the film is left to make a restoration remains to be seen. In addition, much of the film that Weigle shot for the Signal Corps still survives. Since Weigle was the Photographic Officer for the 35th Division between 28 September 1918 and 15 January 1919, he either personally photographed or was responsible for these films that are at the National Archives in Washington. Most notable are the *Meuse-Argonne Offensive, 26 Sep – 11 Nov 1918*, *35th Division*; *Antiaircraft Activities in the AEF*; and a fifteen-reel film entitled *35th Division*. Footage of the 35th Division from the same period is included in the compilation films *Flashes of Action*; *Shots of the World War*; and several films on post-armistice training.[67] Of course one hopes that other films by Weigle will resurface, as well as more about Weigle himself. It should also be emphasized that a lot of the World War I documentary material is not so much lost as recycled. Many documentary films were made "on the cheap" in the 1920s and 1930s using this footage, then re-recycled for television; a thorough search for this material still needs to be made.

Conclusion

The success of *On the Belgian Battlefields* and *The German Side of the War* was to a large extent due to Edwin Weigle. Because of his perseverance and eagerness to reach the front lines he managed to get the official papers he needed. The contract that he closed with the Belgian Red Cross marked the way to the "official war" pictures of the years 1915–1916, when the Allies and the Central Powers released their documentary films on the U.S. market in their attempt to influence American public opinion.

Weigle's work was in a word, impressive. Perhaps his war films showed little more than what was already in standard newsreels: parades, scenes of

Fig. 11. Intertitle from *The German Side of the War*, first series. Library of Congress, M/B/RS Division.

the wounded taken from the trenches, civilian life, etc. But it was the official character of the *Tribune's* films, together with the human interest appeal of Weigle's adventures in Europe, that set these war documentaries apart from what the audience had been used to. The *Chicago Tribune* discovered that with the use of an enterprising photographer and the right amount of publicity they could turn the European War into a cinematic commercial success story.

Now, of course, the passage of almost one hundred years makes even the most banal of these World War images fascinating to us. We are almost in the position of the viewer of 1915, grateful for the miracle of these films and not minding the clumsiness of the technology, the lack of sophistication in the editing, or the static long shots. On the contrary, they are evidence that the film was not faked at a later date. Weigle and his contemporaries bring us the priceless gift of the past.

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13. Ramsaye, 684. For the *Herald*, another newspaper anxious to get into the newsreel business, Harold Brown produced the newsreel *Chicago Herald Movies* in 1914.
14. Graham, "The Kaiser and the Cameraman", 23.
15. Edwin F. Weigle, "Laughing in the Face of Death, by Edwin F. Weigle, Eye Witness of the Battle of Vera Cruz", *Chicago Daily Tribune* (10 May 1914): G1. There is no known support for Weigle's story, but

there is nothing to refute it, either. The navy and marines first landed on Tuesday, not Wednesday. According to the reports of William W. Canada, U.S. Consul in Vera Cruz, the marines from the *Prairie* landed in Vera Cruz at about 11:20 a.m. on Tuesday, 21 April 1914. It would appear that Weigle is wrong when he says that the date was Wednesday. If it were Wednesday, a day after the invasion, Weigle and Durborough would not have been on the Mexican side of the lines. In addition, the marines' first objective after they landed on Tuesday was the railroad terminal to get control of the trains before the Mexicans did (they did not succeed; the trains had been ordered out of Vera Cruz), which makes Weigle's statement that he was photographing Mexicans embarking on a train unlikely. If the date were actually Tuesday, the man Weigle saw shot could have been one of several marines or sailors. Four Americans – two marines and two sailors – died on 21 April. Corporal Daniel Aloysius Haggerty died on 21 April, but Haggerty was killed at 1:30 pm on the roof of the Hotel Terminal. The other was Private Samuel Marten, born Samuel Meisenberg who was part of the landing party from the U.S.S. *Florida*. Seamen George Poinsett and John F. Schumacher, both from the landing party of the U.S.S. *Florida*, were killed the first day. Poinsett is unlikely, because he was reported hoisting the flag on the plaza when he was shot. The landing party from the U.S.S. *Florida* came ashore on 21 April about the same time as the *Prairie*. U.S. Marine Corps Muster Rolls, 1798–1940, National Archives Microfilm T1118, Ancestry.com; Robert E. Quirk, *An Affair of Honor: Woodrow Wilson and the Occupation of Veracruz* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1967), 93–95; Thomas Herbert Russell, *Mexico in Peace and War* (Chicago: Reilley-Britton Syndicate, 1914), 22.

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19. Ibid., 15.

20. Weigle, *My Experiences on the Belgian Battlefields*, 32–35.

21. Ibid., 43. Patterson, in the introduction to Weigle's book, substantiates Weigle's story.

22. Ibid., 37–38. *In Fighting in Flanders* Powell tells the same story, and there is a photograph of the dead boy and his sister in the wheelbarrow. All the photographs in *Fighting in Flanders* are credited to Donald C. Thompson. Powell, *Fighting in Flanders*, 173.

23. Herbert Jäger, *German Artillery in World War I* (Ramsbury, Marlborough: Crowood Pres, 2009), 57, 68.

24. Edward Eyre Hunt, *War Bread* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1916), 87. The shelling of 74 rue du Péage was probably one of the most well documented events in the Great War. While insignificant in itself, it is representative of the intense German shelling of Antwerp between the 6 and 10 October, when the city finally surrendered. Weigle wrote about it (*infra*), E.E. Hunt wrote about it, Horace Green wrote about it, and James H. Hare, another famous war photographer, photographed the battered facade of 74 rue de Péage, American flag still flying, for *Leslie's Weekly*. His photograph is reproduced in Hunt's book. See also Horace Green, *The Log of a Noncombatant* (Teddington: Echo Library, 2008; first published 1915), 46–52. Arthur Ruhl of *Colliers* wrote about it, *The New York Times Current History of the War, Vol. 2, 1915*, (New York: Chadwyck-Healey, 1915), 686.

25. Weigle, *My Experiences on the Belgian Battlefields*, 54.

26. **AUTHOR PLEASE SUPPLY CITATION**

27. Joseph Medill Patterson, "'Tribune' Photograph Saves Antwerp's Fine Cathedral", *Chicago Daily Tribune* (21 October 1914): 1; Weigle, *My Experiences on the Belgian Battlefields*, 28.

28. "8,000 Persons Jam Theater to see War Films", *Chicago Sunday Tribune* (15 November 1914): 9.

29. "Chicago Letter", *Moving Picture World* (5 December 1914): 1362; "War Pictures Sweep United States", *Billboard* (28 November 1914): 58.

30. Joseph Medill Patterson, letter of recommendation for military service, 23 June 23 1917.

31. "War Pictures Fakey", *Variety* (21 November 1914): 7. See also a similar article in *Variety* (28 November): 22. *Variety* watched the newspapers enter the documentary and newsreel business with an unmistakable sense of distrust. Whether the films were as bad as it says, or the trade paper was trying to protect the studios, still their major source of advertising, is unclear.

32. "Belgian War Pictures", *Variety* (4 December 1914). See also *Moving Picture World* (12 December 1914): 1507.

33. *Moving Picture World* (21 November 1914): 1113.

34. "Chicago Letter", *Moving Picture World* (10 January 1915): 655.

35. Patterson, *Notebook of a Neutral*, 45. It might be fairly charged that *My Experiences on the Belgian Battlefields* is not as even handed in its description of the war as it seems – more for what it does not say than for what it says. Weigle shows compassion for the refugees, but always avoids mention of the cause of their misery. In his book on page 31, there is a photograph of a group of Belgian refugees with the caption "Belgians Forced out of Homes by War",

which seems an evasive way of putting it. Jeff Lipkes's excellent book on the atrocities committed by the German army in Belgium only covers August 1914, and not September when Weigle started filming. Nevertheless, Weigle photographed at Aerschot (Aarschot) when the atrocities were still going on or had just ended. Lipkes spends an entire chapter on Aerschot. The Germans murdered between 150 and 180 civilians, including men, women and children, in three mass executions, raped countless women and deported 300 civilians, including Aerschot's priests, to concentration camps in Germany. On 10 September, Alexander Powell and the American photographer Donald C. Thompson were permitted to enter Aerschot and found a ghost city. Powell said, "in many parts of the world I have seen terrible and revolting things, but nothing so ghastly, as terrifying as Aarschot. Over two thirds of the houses had been burned down and showed unmistakable signs of having been sacked by a maddened soldiery before they were burned. Everywhere were the ghastly evidence. Doors had been smashed in with rifle butts and boot-heels; windows had been broken; furniture had been wantonly destroyed; pictures had been torn from the walls; mattresses had been ripped open with bayonets in search of valuables; drawers had been emptied upon the floors; the outer walls of the houses were splattered with blood and pock-marked with bullets; the sidewalks were slippery with broken wine bottles; the streets were strewn with women's clothing. It needed no one to tell us the details of that orgy of blood and lust. The story was so plain that anyone could have read it." Jeff Lipkes, *Rehearsals: The German Army in Belgium, 1914* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2007), 170, citing Powell, *Fighting in Flanders*, 85–88. All Weigle has to say about Aerschot is that "We spent a few days in trips to Aerschot and Malines, where we found that the destruction wrought by the big guns had brought down beautiful buildings." Weigle, *My Experiences on the Belgian Battlefields*, 46.

36. Edwin F. Weigle, *On Four Battle Fronts with the German Army* (Chicago: Chicago Tribune, 1915), 11–16. Unless otherwise noted, Weigle's description of his first trip to the German and Austrian fronts is taken from this book.

37. "Written on the Screen", *New York Times* (26 September 1915): Section VI, 4. Part of the Austrians' cooperation was probably also due to their policy of helping receptive foreign war correspondents who were after all carrying their message. In this, the Austrians were far more clever than the Germans or the British. Van Dopperen, 26–27.

38. On the Somme's general terrain and the Germans' use of it, see also C.R.M.F. Crutwell, *A History of the Great War 1914–1918* (Chicago: Academy Publishers, 2007; first published, 1934), 257.

39. An extremely useful recent book on this campaign is *Richard L. DiNardo, Breakthrough: The Gorlice-Tarnow Campaign, 1915.* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010).

40. James O'Donnell Bennett, "Heavy Cannon Seal the Fate of Przemysl", *Chicago Daily Tribune* (21 June 1915); see also Allen L. Churchill, *The Story of the Great War* (New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1916–20), 5, 252. **AUTHOR – PLEASE CHECK DATE?**

41. Weigle also told the secret service that he sailed from Denmark back to the U.S. to get his film into the theaters before his competitor, W.H. Durborough. Graham, "The Kaiser and the Cameraman", 34.

42. *The German Side of the War*, Theater Program, author Graham's private collection.

43. "Thrilling Reels Show Life on Big Newspaper", *Chicago Daily Tribune* (17 August 1915): 13.

44. "Sell Soda Checks as Theatre Tickets: Speculators Swindle Aliens at Movie Exhibition of 'German Side of the War'", *New York Times* (21 September 1915): 11; Ramsaye, 686.

45. *Variety* (24 September 1915): 17.

46. "Germany on the Screen", *New York Times* (21 September 1915): 11; "*The German Side of the War*", *Variety* (8 October 1915).

47. Joseph Medill Patterson to General Max Hoehn, 22 November 1915; Joseph Medill Patterson to unknown, 22 November 1915, Joseph Medill Patterson Collection, Donnelley Library.

48. "War Movie Man, Edwin F. Weigle, Has New Film", *Chicago Daily Tribune* (21 June 1916): 17. Weigle probably witnessed and filmed one of the numerous German explosions in the area between La Bassée and Arras, the battleground most adjacent to Lille where he was stationed. In January and February 1916, the Germans exploded mines at Saint-Laurent northeast of Arras, and at Souchez near Vimy Ridge, the so-called Giesler-Höhe. According to German headquarters, in one 250-meter section of the front at Lens, from the end of April to the end of October 1916, friend and foe alike exploded 36 mines, digging out craters up to 55 meters across. "And then suddenly half a mountain of earth and stone fly upward and with it countless bodies of men fly apart like chaff." "Zwischen La Bassée und Arras *Berichte aus dem deutschen" Großen Hauptquartier vom 23 und 24 Dezember 1916*, 3–4. http://www.stahlgewitter.com.weltkrieg/1916_arras_la_bassee.htm

49. *Chicago Daily Tribune* (21 June 1916): 17.

50. *Chicago Daily Tribune* (26 July 1916): 2. As previously suggested, some of this film may have come from film sources in Vienna.

51. Patterson, letter of recommendation for military service, 23 June 1917.

52. Larry Lane Ward, *The Motion Picture Goes to War* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1985), 96–97; *Photographic Journal of America 54* (Philadelphia, Edward L. Wilson Company, Inc, 1917), 486; Charles J. Columbus, "Photography Will Win the War", *Photographers Association News*, 4, no. 9 (October 1917): 272–274. Ron van Dopperen, "Shooting the Great War: Albert Dawson and the American Correspondent Film Company, 1914–1918", *Film History*, 4 (1990): 123–129.
53. "Chicagoans Who Are Serving Country in Washington", *Chicago Daily Tribune* (24 June 1918): 6.
54. Edwin F. Weigle, "My personal Narrative of Experiences as Photo Officer of the 35th Division", Private Collection; Robert H. Ferrell, *Collapse at Meuse-Argonne; The Failure of the Missouri-Kansas Division* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri, 2004).
55. "Day's Arrivals of Chicagoans from Overseas", *Chicago Daily Tribune* (13 June 1919): 10.
56. "Weigle Brings 110 Miles Film War History", *Chicago Daily Tribune* (13 June 1919): 2; "107 Mi. of A.E.F. Official Films Land in New York", *Sunday Republican* (Mitchell, South Dakota) (22 June 1919): Section 2, 1.
57. http://ancestry.com , U.S. World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942 [database on line], Provo, Utah, USA, 2007; Faith J. Hasler, granddaughter of Edwin F. Weigle, telephone conversation, 4 June 2010; *Who's Who in Chicago and Vicinity* (enlarged to include the State of Illinois) (Chicago: A. N. Marquis Company, 1941), 881.
58. "War Romance: Battle Line Photographer Wins Highland Park Girl", *Chicago Daily Tribune* (16 September 1919): 6.
59. Joseph Medill Patterson, letter of understanding 19 July 1920. Joseph Medill Patterson Collection, Donnelley Library.
60. Mrs. Edwin F. Weigle [Florence M. Weigle], *Ireland as It Is Today*. (n.p., 1920), 30. Irish-born Daniel Mannix was the Archbishop of Melbourne, Australia, who by 1920 was admired by Irish Catholics and despised by Protestants. Among other things, he had advocated that Australia stay out of England's fight in World War I. Ballymacarret remained a hot spot in Belfast, and was the site of some vicious fighting in the 1970s.
61. "Tribune Film on Ireland Thrills Censor Board", *Chicago Daily Tribune* (15 December 1920): 16.
62. "Ireland in Revolt", *Variety* (14 January 1921).
63. Kenan Heise, Obituary of Hubert N. Kelley, *Chicago Tribune* (6 December 1991): 17.
64. Lloyd Wendt, *Chicago Tribune*, 419.
65. *Chicago Sunday Tribune* (26 December 1915): VII, 3; *Chicago Daily Tribune* (3 January 1916): 17.
66. *Newsclips from Various Newsreels, no. 9*, Library of Congress, Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division, AFI/Rubin Collection, FEB1156.
67. Philip W. Stewart, *Battlefilm: U. S. Army Signal Corps Motion Pictures of the Great War* (2nd edn) (2010: Crestview, Florida: PMS Press, 2007).

Abstract: Edwin F. Weigle: Cameraman for the *Chicago Tribune*, by Cooper C. Graham and Ron van Dopperen

In the period before and during World War I, American newspapers were involved in a cutthroat war to increase circulation. To do so, they increasingly turned to tie-ins with the new popular medium of motion pictures in order to boost readership, and to increase newspaper profits by theatre receipts as well. In response to these pressures, the *Chicago Tribune* decided to groom photographer Edwin F. Weigle as its film correspondent overseas. To this end, it sent Weigle to Vera Cruz to film conflict in April 1914, and in August, after the World War broke out, to Belgium. In 1915 and 1916 the *Tribune* sent him to Europe on two different occasions, where he made feature documentary films. When the United States entered the war in 1917, Weigle joined the U. S. Army Signal Corps, and filmed with the 35th Division in France. After the war, Weigle and his wife filmed in Ireland during the Troubles in the 1920s. Weigle retired as a film correspondent shortly after World War I. The article investigates the changes in film production in the dawning age of big newsreel companies.

Key words: World War I, American newspapers, Edwin F. Weigle, Mexico, Ireland, *Chicago Tribune*.